

- 586
732 no difficulty in getting wives to stay with them. Dwarfs, on the other hand, not only find it hard to get wives except their elder brothers' widows, but are passed over in the succession to a post of responsibility or the management of a family. Madness is particularly dreaded, and would certainly involve the elopement of a wife. But husbands, though they would divorce a mad woman *a thoro*, would still maintain them; sexual intercourse with a mad woman is believed to result in complete loss of virility. I have heard of no case in which a husband has divorced his wife; she may be frigid or barren or in other ways unsatisfactory, but so long as she is not unfaithful her husband is expected to maintain her, and his remedy is to seek another co-wife, often getting her younger sister or parallel-cousin as compensation for her falling short of expectations. The murder of wives in sudden fits of temper for petty shortcomings is unfortunately common among the Bison-horn Marias, though almost unknown in the hills. Nor must it be assumed that because Bison-horn wives often elope, their husbands tamely submit to infidelity; the detection of an intrigue often results in the husband killing the wife or her paramour, though once a wife has made good her escape to another man's house the husband usually accepts the *fait accompli*. The beating or ill-treatment of wives is strongly condemned by all Marias.^q
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^q [see cat. 116, p. 425, -Analyst]

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Besur, Damsa Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sam-bhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered.

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chani-yagon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection.

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul.

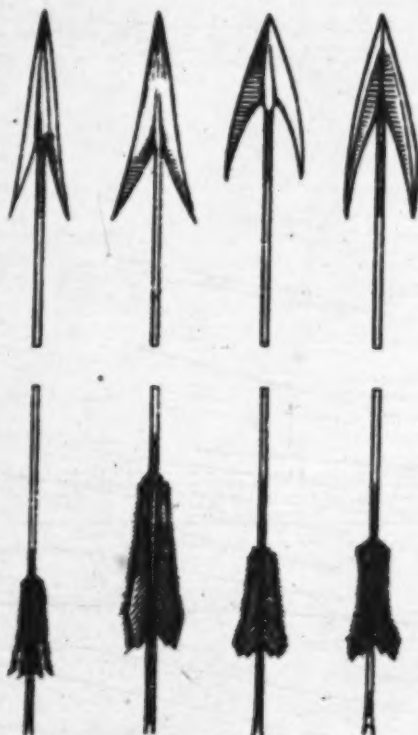


FIG. 10. Arrows and arrow-heads
Length 5'

I

*Chikhal mālī hariya māma hāri-
gir hārigir shikāri shikāri!*
Tupak aḥje hima māma.
Māli gondi tupāk māma.

Gopir hower soḥ māma.

O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!

Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
The name of the gun is Maligondi,
uncle shikari.

Make gunpowder with gum from the
mode tree, uncle shikari.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

772 means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub
slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose
775 brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In
at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.¹ I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.² The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. THE INTERVENTION OF THE DEPARTED IN HUMAN AFFAIRS

775 But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally
769 interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are particularly
interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any
breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery
is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is
brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings
must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or
grievous hurt, peace can only be made between the two families if peace is
made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by
the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery
with another man.

769 The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest
to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they
throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead.
Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor
for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every
prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are
invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make
fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the
village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall,
to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing,
to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

¹ Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 96.

² Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubstantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

X883
836
[837]

A year after my marriage, the Maharaja came to Bara Dongar and I went with my father to see him enthroned. Afterwards we went to Malakot, and I slept in the ghotul for two nights. While all were asleep one of the girls came secretly to me.

Here we have a picture of a situation where a boy who is a member of a *jodidār* ghotul and thus supposed to be faithful to his official partner, yet continues his romantic attachment to the girl he really loves and whom he ultimately marries. Budhu was also able to evade the rules by visiting ghotul of the other type. Had the Sonawal and Kokori ghotul also been of the *jodidār* pattern, they could not have extended to him such privileges.

It will be noted that these temporary encounters with other girls did not in any way interfere with the boy's devotion to his Malko and the happiness of his married life with her. He says, and I have no doubt that it is true, that he has never had an affair with a married woman, or indeed with any other woman after the early incident in the Malakot ghotul. 'After a year my wife stopped me going to the ghotul.'

Here is another significant record of life in a *jodidār* ghotul at the time of the Bastar rebellion (1911). The narrator is Gadru, a Muria of the Kunjami clan from Chaniyagaon.

After I had been in the ghotul a year I was given the name of Silledar at the time of the Chait Dandar, and six months later I was paired off with the Jhalaro and began to sleep with her. The Mukhiya warned us both not to have too frequent intercourse and to take every care that there was no scandal [i.e. pregnancy]. I slept with the Jhalaro daily, but I only went to her twice a week or even less. The girl who really loved me in the ghotul was the Alośa, my mother's brother's daughter. Her partner was the Jhoria and she had to sleep with him every night. But when he was asleep, she often used to crawl over to my mat and I would turn my back on the Jhalaro and make love to her.

An old woman of about seventy years of age, Koili of Berma village, gave some interesting reminiscences of her ghotul life.

For six months after I joined the ghotul, until I got a title, I slept with the little boys. When I was made Nirośa I was too poor to give the usual feast of parched rice and liquor, but the chelik collected money for me and got a rupee's worth of liquor so I was not shamed. That night everyone was very drunk, and the Kotwar who slept with me had intercourse with me for the first time. The next day the Kotwar ordered that henceforth I was to sleep every day with the Sirdar. The Sirdar was related to me, though distantly, as a parental uncle, and I did not like it at all, but I had to do what the Kotwar said. We were both very shy and never spoke to one another and slept back to back with faces turned away. It was a long time before we had intercourse, but when there was a marriage in the village, everyone got drunk and excited and that night we went to each other. After that our shyness disappeared, and we used to have congress every night.

Soon afterwards my betrothal ceremony took place. Among those who came for it was the Kapatdar of the Veleknar ghotul. The Sirdar had gone away somewhere, and that night the Kapatdar slept with me. When the others knew of it, they laughed at us and teased us; I was so embarrassed that for a whole week I stayed away from the ghotul.

When I was married, the motiari brought me to the ghotul compound

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young. 883x 582

Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'. 883x 591

A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palari, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. MARRIED MEN IN THE GHOTUL

Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two chelik and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval. 883x 837 684

In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted. 883x 837

But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums. 883x 626

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
626 When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic, they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently hardened to persist in their visits after this.

X 883
837 But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Marn, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1941 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahua Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

X 883
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589 There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul, Dasru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

X 883 The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

X 883
589 But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she said, 'well, why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

what she was really like, so I went to the house and asked her to lie with me. She asked me what I was doing outside and I said I was drinking in honour of her marriage to me. Although she had been very sweet to me up to that moment, she suddenly cried, 'No, you are simply drinking my urine'. I was drunk and got very angry, and though she tried to prevent me I forced her. But it gave me no pleasure.

Next morning I found the girl was ill. There was no fever or anything we could see, but she lay sick on the ground. I took her to a Siraha and we had to stay with him for a fortnight. I used to give her food and do everything for her, but she got no better. One day I tried to have her again, but she said, 'Wait a moment while I go outside' and she slipped out of the house and ran for her life to her own village. I am sure that my elder wife did some magic to turn this girl's heart away from me. Later I tried to marry another girl, my elder brother's widow, and my wife drove her away also.¹

VI. ADULTERY

The Muria have the reputation of observing a very high standard of marital fidelity, and all my observations go to confirm popular report. The incidence of divorce, less than 3 per cent, suggests that they regard marriage as something to persevere in, and while obviously no statistics can be supplied for individual infidelities, social tradition and religious belief are directed towards making adultery both difficult and dangerous.

The Muria, usually so tolerant and gentle, are here exceptionally rigorist. Adultery brings the swift vengeance of heaven not only on the guilty individuals, but on the tribe. A woman's sin can ruin the ritual hunt and in consequence endanger the year's harvest. The vision of priest or medium can be dimmed by the infidelity of a wife, children may suffer and die, tigers may assail the village herds. The guilty pair themselves are visited with a shocking punishment; their bodies become covered with sores and swellings, and a watery dropsy brings a wretched death.

This is no empty danger, as is proved by actual examples. The Solia of Munjmata told me how his grandfather died of this cause; in Sidhawand, when a man eloped with a married woman, his father died of dropsy and he himself became a permanent invalid. In Lihagaon, one Badru died after an act of adultery. This vengeance comes from the Departed who are the guardians of the purity of family and clan. In Kongera an outraged husband 'set the Departed on the guilty' and wife and lover fell very ill. At Netanar a Muria said that he was only able to preserve his wife's virtue by the help of the Departed whom he constantly invoked for this purpose.

Adultery is suspected when cattle die suddenly, especially if the tongue protrudes and there is a certain kind of watery discharge. The Siraha then

¹ In Indian tradition and folk-lore, the majority of heroes are successfully polygamous—Rama-chandra being a notable exception. In the *Katha Sauri Sagara*, the first wife is represented as welcoming her new companions. Suryaprabha married seven wives on seven consecutive days: by his magic powers he was able to divide his body and live with them all at once.—H. M. Fensler, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924-5), Vol. I, p. 429. Narayanaswami had a similar power of self-multiplication (*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 477. See also Vol. I, p. 451). Folk-lore wives usually agree—unless they all combine against a youngest favourite. Among Gullala Shah's happy co-wives, Panj Phul helps her husband to obtain his fourth.—J. H. Knowles, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir* (London, 1886), pp. 466 and 467 and compare M. Freyre, *Old Dacca Days* (London, 1920), p. 324. There is an amusing note on the subject in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 318f.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

837 has to divine who is the guilty party in order that peace may be made and danger averted.

783 Adultery therefore is not only the betrayal of tribal fellowship, the infringement of another's right to property, a breach of sexual tradition, but it is highly dangerous. A sort of public apology has to be made to the betrayed husband and a ceremony of purification performed.

In order to avert their fate, once the matter has become public, the guilty pair go to the Gaita with a pig or goat which he offers to the local deities and the Departed. Then he goes with witnesses to the nearest tank. On a stone he puts two bits of broken earthenware and some dub grass. Everyone present puts one foot on the stone; the Gaita throws water and liquor over the guilty pair who cry, 'Let us not now swell with water. May the Yer Kanyang living in the midst of this water make an end of our sin (*ph*)'. The seducer then greets the woman's husband and all is forgiven.¹

x883 A similar ceremony is performed in the *jodidar* ghotul if a chelik goes off with another boy's motiari, or if he sleeps with her in his absence. At Atargaon, 836 where a chelik eloped with another's ghotul-wife, but was brought back after a few days, the ghotul Manjhi took the two 'husbands' out of the village to 783 a place where two paths crossed. He made them stand on either side of the path and put a knife on the ground and above the knife a stone. He made the boys put their right feet on the stone and gave them each seven leaf-cups of water. Seven times they exchanged the cups of water and seven times cups of liquor, and swore to preserve friendship with one another. The seducer promised to pay a heavy fine if it happened again.

x883 There is one type of adultery, however, which does not seem to be taken too seriously. 'Suppose a girl has a ghotul lover.' So they put it at Marka- 836 bera. 'She elopes with him. They are brought back and she is quickly married to her betrothed. After a few weeks she runs away again to her lover. She is again brought back, again accepted by her husband, though he knows she 837 has slept with her old lover. And then she is happy at last and settles down.' 'It is like getting a new cow,' said the chelik at Nayanar. 'She does not at first like her new home. She runs back to the herd and her former pastures. But we don't beat her for that; we are rather doubly kind.'

In dealing with a motiari-wife, that is not only kind; it is intelligent.

VII. DIVORCE

586 Throughout tribal India divorce is easy and generally the wife has the same rights as her husband. Among the Muria divorce on either side is possible, but the stability of their marriage tradition makes it a comparatively rare event. I have already described how divorce can be effected in a *jodidar* ghotul. Similar ceremonies can release a woman from her partner in adult life. These ceremonies, it must be observed, are essentially rites of purification; they are retrospective, having reference to an already existing state of affairs. The actual union with a new partner and the paying of compensation effects the divorce; now husband and wife have to be free, not of each other—for they are that already—but of the dangers that cling to the conduct of one or both.

The ceremonies are the same as those by which a couple taken in adultery are cleared of their fault. Whether the woman returns to her own husband

¹ A similar ceremony is performed to purify a boy who sleeps with a near relative in the ghotul, but in this case a root or cucumber is used instead of a goat for sacrifice.

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

626 Quarrels are equally dangerous. They not only destroy one of the chief of the Muria's treasures—his sense of tribal solidarity—but like adultery they bring the vengeance of heaven upon the village that indulges in them. They must, therefore, be avoided and if they do occur peace must be made at once. In Binjhli Tetku and his brother Maria had a row over a field and beat each other. Their *saga*-relatives hurried to the village, they got *salphi* and *mahua* liquor, and held a panch. The Gaita dipped a gold ear-ring in water and sprinkled it over the two offenders; he dipped the ear-ring also in the liquor. Each brother gave the other a drink and peace was established. When Dandu and Aitu quarrelled in Masora, everyone was afraid that some epidemic would attack the village. They both did indeed fall ill, their bodies swelling mysteriously. They called the Gaita and gave him a pig, five measures of rice and a rupee's worth of liquor to sacrifice. He did so, praying, 'O Mahapuub, you are the earth, you are our mother. We have made a mistake. Even an elephant with four feet sometimes slips; what can we men with only two feet do? We give you this offering, let there be no more trouble.' And he warned the quarrellers that next time it would cost them ten rupees to make peace.

152 Everything in Muria society is thus calculated to render jealousy unnecessary, dangerous and undignified. Its absence is further proved, not only by a mass of statements and absence of the criminal cases that would certainly arise from it, but by concrete instances of social practice. For example, the Muria does not insist on his wife coming to him as a virgin, nor does she expect that her husband should find in her the first girl he has ever loved. When we consider the vast number of peoples who have required an exactly opposite state of things, we see how free the Muria must be from jealousy affecting the period before marriage.

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152 After marriage, says the best Muria opinion, husband and wife should never refer to their lives in the ghotul, still less should they rebuke each other with their old love-affairs. The very fact that exceptions to this are so carefully noted shows how rare they are. A Saldar of Botha is said to have forced his wife to swear that she never slept with any boy in her ghotul. The Diwan of Nayanar is said to have constantly nagged his young wife about a former lover till she stopped him by saying, 'Very well, if it is true—as you say—that I love him so much, I will go and live with him'. At Alor the Gaita said, 'A boy may try to get his wife to confess what she did in her ghotul, but he has no right to, and she can always say "Whatever I did, you did the same or more"'. It was considered a very severe rebuke indeed when the Kotwar of Almer shouted at his lary wife, 'Why don't you get up earlier to work? Didn't your parents teach you how to work, or did they only train you to sleep with the *chelik* night and day?'

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337 A husband is generally very good to a wife who as a *motiari* got a child by another man. He takes the child as his own and the convention is that no reference should ever be made to the matter. This would not be so astonishing if it only happened when a girl conceived in the ghotul, for any sensible man would regard it as the logical conclusion of what he had already accepted, that his wife was sleeping with other youths throughout the period of their engagement. But it is remarkable, I think, when a boy accepts a girl who has run away with another man whom she obviously loves and is going to have a child who will constantly remind her of this former lover. An incident at Samalpur is typical of scores of others which I have recorded. In this village the Sirdar of the ghotul made a girl pregnant and ran away with her. They were brought back and he was fined five rupees and the girl was married to her betrothed.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

593 A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby? Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilizing him to some extent.

587 We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows 152 whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it is as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. QUARRELS AND THEIR CAUSES

152 For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria 578 life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiar during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude; every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

CHAPTER SIX

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: MARITAL
INFIDELITY

I

[36] The Maria allow their women a great deal of freedom in
[57] their pre-nuptial period, but for matrimonial relationships
they have a strict regard. They are jealous and possessive
by temperament, passionate as lovers,¹ suspicious and

[30]



Maria girls' neck-band

exacting husbands. Divorce is rare; adultery is dangerous,
a crime the end of which cannot be foreseen.

- 337 Adultery is dangerous, for unless proper precautions are
taken the ancestors of the household and the clan-god may

¹ But as elsewhere in India 'lust-murder' does not occur. 'Lust-murder, as one of the phenomena of psychopathia sexualis, appears to be better known in the more highly cultured countries of the West than in the East, where capital offences have their basis in less recondite mental processes'. S. M. Edwards, *Crime in India* (Oxford, 1924), p. 28.

- 837 get offended, and in their anger kill the cattle and other livestock. When an animal dies for this cause, its tongue protrudes and a watery discharge issues from its mouth. In Dhurli the Maria said that the guilty person might go blind, and in Mathadi we were told how an old woman did actually become blind as a result of betraying her husband. If a wife commits adultery when her husband is absent on a hunting expedition, her act will 'defile the earth' and the hunt will be ruined. The arrows will fly crookedly, and the husband himself may trip over a stump. He may be bitten by a snake or hit with an arrow. If the deceived husband is a magician, his vision will be clouded. If the proper ceremonies are not performed, he may be afflicted with a watery swelling that may cause death.

- x 674 If a murder is committed on account of adultery, the
- 783 families both of the murderer and his victim may suffer from this swelling. To prevent the danger, the elders of each house gather together; they mix milk and water in a leaf-cup of mahua leaves and say, 'These sinned; but let not their sin be on us'. Then a representative of each house drinks a little. The family of the murdered man gives a present (which is called in Halbi *bhul-karcha*) to the family of the murderer. A measure of rice is put under the eaves of the victim's house. In the rice there is placed some thread, a ring and an arrow. The two families feast together on pork and rice, and swear friendship with each other. The arrow remains as witness to their oath. Then the murderer's family [769] take the *bhul-karcha* home, and offer it to the Departed in their own house.

- 578 Quarrels are always dangerous, for they disturb tribal
- 787 solidarity and may earn the vengeance of the Departed. Indeed it is dangerous even to dream of a quarrel; if you do, you should sacrifice to the Earth the next morning. If husband and wife are known to be constantly at odds with one another, a panchayat is held and one or both may be fined.

- 783 When Oyami Anda of Harmamunda carried off and married a girl for whom another youth was serving as Lamhada, he not only had to pay compensation for the work done by the other boy, but a ceremony was performed to purify both parties of enmity. Anda stood with the Lamhada

539 had seen him entering, he knew that he was hiding some-
 773 where and so he set fire to the building and went away.
 The fire did not harm the man, but some of the bird's
 feathers were burnt. The soul of the clan-god in Gadapal
 is in that bird, and to this day the bird can be seen, though
 now it is made of iron, and on its body the marks made
 by the burns remain.

'The eldest brother then went to Mailawada and lived
 there. He consulted the Waddai about the death of his
 sister's child, and it was revealed to him that the girl had
 been committing adultery with another man, and that on
 the very day she had bathed after her menstrual period, she
 [245] had had intercourse both with her husband and her lover.
 The result of this was twins. But the Departed were offended
 at her conduct, and as a result one of the twins died after
 a few days and the second was killed by the Departed who
 first took the form of a hare and excited the dogs, and
 then possessed the dogs and killed the child in the swing'.

Such stories are not mere fairy-tales. They are part of
 the actual life of the people, vividly believed and actually
 experienced. To aboriginals who live in such an atmosphere
 and depend so entirely on the supernatural, the cumbersome
 and vulgar machinery of human courts of justice seems
 comparatively unimportant. It is said that many murderers
 find a sort of relief in going to jail, since they believe that
 this earthly punishment may save them from the vengeance
 of the Departed.

782 But as often in the aboriginal world there are regular
 837 methods of evading these dangers. If a man wishes to
 commit adultery, he makes offerings to the Departed and
 prays, 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on
 the husband of this girl and not on me', and then he
 addresses his ancestors, 'Away with you. Go to water and
 to wind. Go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me
 whatever happens'.

684 There is no doubt, however, that many Maria are not
 satisfied with such ceremonies, and that they consider them-
 selves entirely justified in killing a wife who is disloyal.
 In particular, the discovery of a woman actually in the
 arms of her lover appears to have so overwhelming an
 emotional effect that the husband is almost bound to strike